GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1092
ANSWERED ON:05.03.2008
PRAVASI BHARTIYA DIWAS
Owaisi Shri Asaduddin;Pandey Dr. Laxminarayan;Rijiju Shri Kiren;Tripathi Shri Chandramani

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas was held recently in Delhi;

(c) if so, the details thereof including the number of delegates, country-wise;

(c) whether the Government has identified any areas in the Social Sector to be funded by NRIs;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the conference discussed the issues related to problems faced by Indians abroad; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the strategy chalked out in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI)

(a) The sixth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas conference was organized at New Delhi on 7-9 January, 2008.

(b) The event was organized in partnership with the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). The theme for this year's PBD was "Engaging the Diaspora: the way forward". The Conference included plenary sessions on 'Social Development Challenges in India: Health & Education', 'Investment & Infrastructure', 'Trade & Business Opportunities','Developmental Challenges of States: Partnership Opportunities', 'Diaspora Philanthropy: Empowerment of Rural Women'. Concurrent Sessions on 'Knowledge Economy', 'Culture' and 'Challenges in Women Empowerment and Leadership' and Regional Working Sessions on 'Gulf', 'Asia-Pacific', 'Africa', 'Americas' and 'Europe' were also held as part of the Conference.

In all, 1500 people participated in the conference. A list indicating the number of registered participants, country-wise, is enclosed.

(c) & (d) Yes Sir, a highlight of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2008 was a plenary session on 'Diaspora Philanthropy: Empowerment of Rural Women'. It was for the first time the potential of overseas Indian engagement through innovative schemes such as extension of micro-credit through self help group of women for their empowerment was discussed. The direct outcome of this session is a proposal to establish and promote an 'India Development Foundation' as an autonomous not-for-profit Trust. The foundation will serve as a credible institutional mechanism to lead overseas Indian philanthropic propensities into human development efforts in India. The Foundation will assist overseas Indians to contribute to the cause of education, health and rural development in their erstwhile home villages, districts or states in partnership with credible NGOs and philanthropic organizations engaged in the social development sector in the country.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) Problems relating to Overseas Indians from around the world including issues relating to overseas Indian marriages, investment difficulties, cultural issues and issues relating to Overseas Citizens of India and People of Indian Origin were discussed in particular, problems faced by Indian workers in Gulf including poor living conditions, air fares, unscrupulous recruiting agents, ill treatment by sponsors, etc. were discussed in the Gulf session. The Ministry has launched several initiatives including an Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) that includes a helpline, an Orientation-cum-skill upgradation training programme for potential emigrants, bilateral MOUs for the protection and welfare of workers with various Gulf countries, a nation-wide awareness campaign for legal and organized migration, compulsory attestation of employment documents and other on site welfare measures with the help of Indian Missions abroad.